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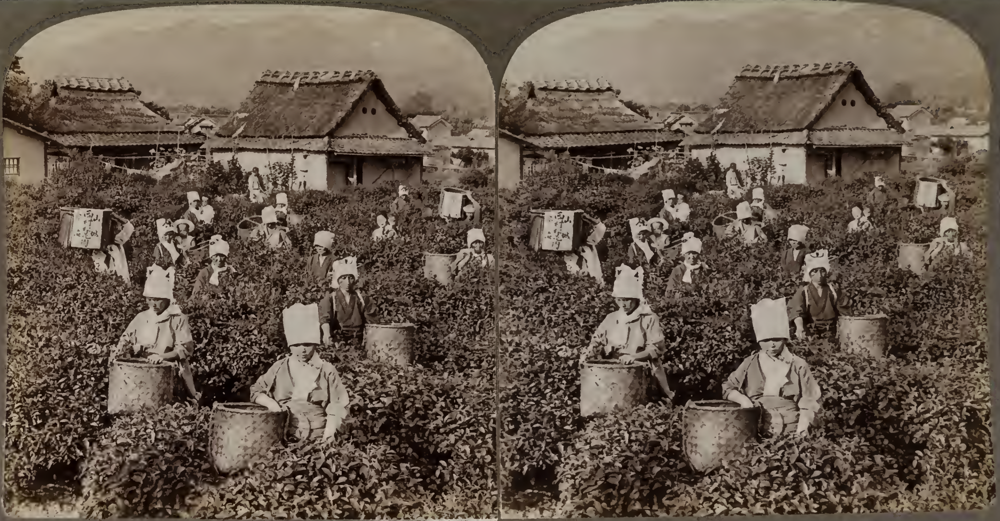

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(76)-3015-Girls picking tea on famous plantation at Uji, among the sunny hills of old Japan.

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You are looking nearly north towards Kyoto, ten miles away beyond those hills covered with pines and bamboos. This particular country neighborhood is exceedingly prosperous, being famous, even in a land of tea planters, for the quality of its product. The glossy green leaves that these girls are picking now to fill their split-bamboo baskets may go half way around the world to delight the taste of an English or American epicure. The secret of the special quality of the tea raised here lies partly in the species of the stock itself (there are shrubs in some of the plantations here said to be over two hundred years old), partly in the soil of the locality, partly in the air, partly in the good judgment with which the leaves are selected by these pickers and partly on the expert skill with which they are dried in baskets over charcoal fires. The plantations are separately owned by local farmers.

Fine as this tea is, there are even superior species raised in this region, with leaves so delicate in texture and flavor that the bushes have to be protected from the direct heat of the sun by awnings of rice-straw laid over a trellis of bamboo.

Towels such as these women wear, make the almost universal head-gear of country women; hats are very little used. The cotton kimonos are of cheap stuff much washed and neatly mended but of the same cut as the most elegant silks and brocades worn in Tokyo.

The babies too wear kimonos cut just like their mothers', the only difference being that they are gayer in color. It is very seldom you see a little child in white according to western custom. There are public schools not far away where these little folks can go later to get the rudiments of an education.

See Scidmore's "Jinrikisha Days in Japan," etc.

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Girls Picking Tea at Uji, Japan.

Filles Cueillant le Thé à Uji, Japon.

Mädchen bei der Tee Ernte in Uji, Japan.

Muchachas Recogiendo el Té en Uji, Japón.

Flickor uppsamlande te vid Uji, Japan.

Дѣвушки срывающія чай въ Ужи, Японія.